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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2006

In Today's Papers

Turkey's EU Bid

Sabah, Hurriyet, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet and others: Hansjoerg Kretschmer, outgoing head of the European Commission Delegation to Turkey, said on his last day of duty that although the Turkish Government wants to keep up with the reform process, the military is resisting. Speaking to CNN-Turk, Kretschmer touched on crucial issues in Turkey's path, such as the deadlock on Cyprus, the reform process and military-civilian relations. On the Cyprus deadlock, Kretschmer stated that if Turkey insists on not opening its ports and harbors to the Greek Cypriots, the EU won't ignore it. Milliyet reports that Cem Ozdemir, the European Parliament's German parliamentarian (Turkish origin), said that it is the right time for Turkey to amend the Turkish Penal Code, Article 301, which relates to freedom of expression. By doing this, Turkey could teach Europe a lesson on the subject. Meanwhile, in a speech yesterday at the opening of Foreign Trade week in Ankara, PM Erdogan fiercely rejected allegations that his government was selling out Turkish interests in Cyprus. Milliyet quoted him as saying, "we have fulfilled our responsibilities in Cyprus. We want our counterparts to meet their obligations too. They should not come with extra demands until they fulfill their own obligations. The Turkish government will never meet such demands."

General Kosaner Comments on the PKK

Hurriyet and Sabah quoted Gendarme Commander General Kosaner as saying that "we are talking to the families of PKK terrorists who are in the mountains, to get them to convince their children to lay down their weapons and come down from the mountains." At an October 29 reception, Kosaner said that the operations will continue without any interruption and the only solution is for the armed people to surrender without any conditions and face justice. He added that, the number of PKK members who had turned themselves in has increased.

Turkey Plans to buy 100 F-35s from the US

Sabah, Hurriyet, Cumhuriyet, Milliyet and others: Papers report that Turkish Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul met with his American counterpart Donald Rumsfeld in Washington. Reportedly, Rumsfeld expressed regret over the "unfortunate map crisis" and stressed that the map had nothing to do with the Pentagon [referring to the use of a map showing an independent Kurdistan, which included parts of Turkey, by a US military officer at a NATO seminar in Rome]. Meanwhile, papers quoted Minister Gonul as saying that Turkey is going to buy 100 F-35s from the US at a cost of \$10 billion.

Cargill Appeals against Court Ruling Halting Production
Hurriyet and Milliyet report US Cargill Turkey CEO Murat Tarakcioglu told a press conference yesterday that a court ruling halting production at the US food giant's facilities in the Bursa province had a discouraging effect on their plans to invest in two other countries through Turkey. "We employ 142 personnel here. We purchased \$50 million worth of corn from farmers last year. There are 25 other operations in the same area in the Bursa province but only Cargill has been suspended. We have appealed against the decision, and hope to be back in business again," Tarakcioglu said. Responding to a question, Tarakcioglu said he would give the key of the factory to any one who proves that Cargill pollutes the environment.

Editorial Commentary on Northern Iraq

Writing in the conservative Turkiye, Yilmaz Oztuna notes that the US appears to be "working" on the PKK issue, but warns that the US may have other plans if Turkey "fails to fulfill its obligations" as a strategic partner: "The anarchy and chaos in Iraq continues to grow every passing day, and nobody, including the US, can make an assessment about the future. A pull out by the US is still unlikely regardless of the outcome of the Congressional elections -- simply because of the oil factor. The US failed to comprehend the internal

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dynamics of Iraq from the very beginning, and in the end it had to make a strong commitment to the Iraqi Kurds. Turkey also has made its share of mistakes by rejecting the movement of American forces through Turkey, which ended up in the creation of a Kurdistan state as well as a significant resurrection of the PKK. Currently Talabani, despite his position as the president of Iraq, is working to divide Iraq and in the interest of Kurdistan. As for Turkey, we continue to focus on the PKK problem but recently put high hopes in America and Iraq for solving the problem. Washington seems to be working on it. Nevertheless the US at the same time keeps some projects in its back pocket, like plans for Greater Kurdistan and Greater Armenia, for use if and when it thinks Turkey is failing to fulfill its obligations as a strategic partner."

TV Highlights NTV (8 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Prime Minister Erdogan stressed Turkey will move ahead after renaming the Copenhagen Criteria if the EU does not allow Turkey to join the bloc.
- The Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) President Rifat Hisarciklioglu warned public support for the EU had decreased, blaming the government for the fall.
- The Turkish police have carried out 6,017 anti-drug smuggling operations in the last nine months in which 13,000 people have been detained and about eight tons of drugs have been seized.
- Turkey's Human Rights Joint Platform has launched a campaign for the abolishment of Article 301 of the penal code and other provisions restricting free speech.

International News

- EU term president Finland's Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja has invited Greek Cypriot counterpart Lillikas, Turkish counterpart Gul and Turkish Cyprus leader Mehmet Ali Talat to meet behind closed doors in a town near Helsinki this weekend.

- Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel plans to expand its military offensive in the Gaza Strip and will decide soon on what kind of operation it will conduct.
- Iranian President Ahmadinejad said UN Security Council sanctions over Iran's nuclear program would only serve to further motivate the Iranian nation.
- Pakistani helicopters destroyed an Islamic school used as an al-Qaeda-linked training camp near the Afghan border, killing some 80 militants.

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